

period, ten railways were handed over, having a mileage of 385. Three of them were not constructed, nor do the Government claim to have constructed them during that period, the mileage of the three being 104, leaving a total mileage of 281 handed over to the working railways. Nine of them were either built or authorised before the present Government took office. Only one line authorised and handed over during the term of the present Government has been constructed, namely, the Norseman-Salmon Gums line, 58 miles in length. If there has been any misconception over my remarks, I regret the inaccuracy and hope my explanation will be taken in the spirit in which it is given, namely with the idea of correcting a wrong immediately I became aware of it.

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

##### *Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central) [4.35]: As a new member I wish to express my views on various matters mentioned in the Governor's Speech. The first question upon which I wish to touch is that of land settlement. While it is a matter for great satisfaction to everybody in the State that land development is making such wonderful strides, it is much to be regretted that more use is not being made of the great area of land that is lying idle in almost every part of the State. One has not to drive about the country in a motor car or other vehicle to find idle land. Riding in a railway train one can see it alongside existing lines, to say nothing of that which is further back. I suppose I would be well within the mark in saying there are hundreds of thousands of acres of land lying idle that should be utilised in some way. While the agricultural and pastoral prospects of the State are illimitable, and therefore will require new railways for their development, I have in view the huge sum of money necessary for interest charges on such new works. This is a matter that should receive the earnest consideration of the Government. With the Central Province, which I have the honour to represent, I am more particularly acquainted, and I consider it my duty to mention just a few of the places in which, to

my personal knowledge, land is lying idle that should be brought into use. Although only a few weeks have elapsed since I was returned to this House, I have received numerous complaints of this nature from people in my province. Those complaints I have placed before the Minister for Lands in writing. Remembering his promise to the people through the public Press that he would do his duty in this direction, regardless of who the offenders might be, I have every confidence that he will compel those people who are holding lands out of use to comply with the law and thus provide more work for the workers and more traffic for the railways. It was surprising to me, when at Ajana, to learn from an old resident that  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the Ajana siding there was a reserve of 2,000 acres. For what purpose do members think it was reserved? For the agistment of two camels, which are used to provide means of locomotion for the men employed to patrol the rabbit-proof fence in that district. Every six miles, areas of some 640 acres are reserved for the same purpose. The settler who drew my attention to the matter said the reserves comprised the very best land and he contended—and I with my very slight knowledge agreed with him—that sandplain country would serve the purpose just as well. Some distance out from Mullewa the dummieing and non-fulfilment of the land conditions are causes for complaint, and the same applies to Gutha and Pintharuka. It is amazing to me that various members of Parliament should so frequently have travelled along the railway through Gutha and not observed the wonderful country adjacent to the railway on both sides that has been lying idle for years past. I am pleased to say that at Gutha matters have altered for the better during the last 12 or 18 months. At Pintharuka the same thing is noticeable some distance from the line. One family holds some thousands of acres and is not complying with the conditions. Such action on their part retards the progress of that portion of the State and should not be permitted. Only yesterday morning Mr. Kempton and I had the duty of introducing a deputation of six or eight settlers to the Minister for Lands asking him to endeavour to expedite their applications for blocks in the Cadgy Cadgy estate. One has only to go to the officials of the Lands Department, and the head officials at that, to hear—well, words almost fail me.



The officials declare that they are sick and tired of the difficulties of allotting the blocks on that estate. The Cadgy Cadgy estate belongs to a pastoral lessee. I was pleased to hear the Minister, from his chair, point out to the deputation that the pastoral lessee had his rights, and that while he filled that chair, he would take care that the lessee's rights were not infringed. No one wishes to deprive the pastoral lessee of his rights. But those six or eight men represent only a fraction of the number who are being held up. One man stated, and I believed him, that he had spent £1,000 of his own money on the block and had been denied bank assistance on that block. That, however, is by the way. When the matter is cleared up I think he will get bank assistance. The deputationists were resisting the demands of the pastoral lessee in respect of improvements on the block. In addition to the demands made upon the selectors for improvements, there was what is known as a demand for severance. I urge the Chief Secretary to direct the attention of the Government to this matter. When the Government repurchase an estate—as they have been good enough to do in my district—they pay down the whole of the price to the owner. Then applications for blocks are sent in, and the land board deal with those applications. I greatly regret that by a land board comprising two Government officials and a private person two blocks were awarded to men well-known to be comparatively wealthy. The question may be asked, what is wrong with that? To my mind the wrong is that the people do not want the Government to repurchase estates for the benefit of men well able to acquire some of the innumerable properties held for sale by land agents. In the cases I refer to, payment is spread over a term of years; and yet the ordinary selector, when selecting from a pastoral leasehold, is expected to pay to the pastoral lessee, on the spot, the amount awarded by the arbitrator. I am speaking on behalf of men prepared to spend their own money in developing blocks through the initial stages, and I hope the matter will receive the Government's consideration. I suggest that the Agricultural Bank might well take over the payments in such cases and spread the total over a term of years. This should not be difficult to arrange if we have faith in our own lands. The estate in question contains some of the best land in Western Australia. The Minister himself acknowledged this. However,

there is interminable delay in the matter. Some of the men on whose behalf I am speaking paid their application and survey fees 18 months ago. Indeed, on the 13th August, 1926, I myself paid £22 7s. 6d. into the lands office at Geraldton for a returned soldier, a married man, who was desirous of securing a block. He has been warned by the Lands Department, as the eight men were warned yesterday morning, that if he does any work on that block he will be doing it at his own risk. This was another case of a pastoral lease. It was not my intention to mention this particular instance, as I think it unfair to pick out something merely because it has happened to come under my personal notice. I come here as a stranger, but the Leader of the House has known me since boyhood. If at any time a member should consider that I am unfair to him, he need only draw my attention to the matter, when I shall at once do the proper thing. I desire fairness from every hon. member, and it will always be my endeavour to give that which I expect to receive. As I have said, I did not want to mention the particular instance I have quoted. However, I met the men who comprised the deputation—they were all strangers to me—when they begged the Minister to resume the whole property. This the Minister, in his wisdom and experience, refused to do; and it is not for me to say he is wrong. However, he admitted that the estate contains excellent farming country. A good deal of it is beyond the 12½ mile limit from a railway. The department intend to have the estate resurveyed, and possibly when the surveyors have dealt with it the Minister's decision may be altered. Meantime, however, selectors are going here, there, and everywhere, which is not in the best interests of the State, since it means picking the eyes out of the country. Selectors pay particular regard to the wheat-growing value of land. If the Government repurchased the property and cut it up, that would stop piecemeal selection. The Minister said to one young man, a returned soldier, "Did I not warn you not to apply for this block?" The reply was, "Yes, but this is a good block of land." Thereupon the Minister said, "I am not talking about the value of the block; but I knew that you would have a lot of trouble." If we are desirous of settling the lands of Western Australia, especially the lands adjacent to existing railways and therefore not calling for the construction of new lines, it is beyond the power of those



in charge of the affairs of the State to make the process of settlement simpler? I am not blaming the present Administration. I do not know how long it is since the Land Act was framed, but in this respect it certainly needs amendment.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There are a great many amendments of the Act.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes. One needs a lawyer to interpret it. It is impossible to speak on the question of land development without referring to what I suppose is regarded as a hardy annual. Coming as I do from Geraldton and representing the Central Province, I say that is the best province in the State from the agricultural and sheep-raising points of view. Therefore, in season and out of season, on every possible occasion I must mention this matter; and I suggest that every representative of the Central Province should bring it under the notice of both Houses of Parliament. The matter I refer to is the purchase of the Midland Railway. Along that railway is land which those who are in a position to judge declare to be second to none, with an assured rainfall all the way. Instead of considering new railways into areas where the conditions are not quite so good, let us first adopt some businesslike method of getting at the value of the Midland Company's line. It is not the railway so much that we should be anxious to acquire, as the lands. We know the railway was built to put the settlers along the line in touch with markets and civilisation. I have taken the trouble to inquire whether the people along the Midland Railway desire that it should be purchased by the Government. Some have said, "It is not for the people along the line to say yea or nay; it is a matter for the consideration of the whole of the people." As the whole of the people cannot speak on this matter, it should receive the earnest consideration of every member of both Houses who is anxious to advance the most important interests of Western Australia. In view of the policy of the present Government, it should be their constant aim and endeavour to acquire the Midland Railway. We know how settlement is retarded along the line because of the fact that selectors there are debarred from receiving Agricultural Bank assistance. Moreover, vast areas adjacent to the line, instead of being in the possession of individuals, should in each case be owned and worked by half a dozen families. Recently a good deal has been heard of the 3,000

farms scheme. We are told that it will be necessary to equip those farms with new railways, with roads, and with water supplies. Not with a view to denying any district its due, but from a sense of responsibility, I urge that the Government, before embarking on such a scheme, should make careful inquiry as to the possibility of bringing into use the thousands of acres lying idle throughout the South-Western portion of the State. As has been said here by other representatives of the Central Province, not far from Geraldton there is a district unknown a few years ago—the Yuna district. Similarly, out beyond Yuna there is an entirely new district which has sprung up within the last year or two—the Dartmoor district. If the Yuna line were extended out to Dartmoor, that extension could connect up with existing railways at some point on the Northampton-Ajana line, across Mullewa. I may mention that I am personally interested in a small property in the district. However, the suggested railway does not matter much to me. Residents of the district assure me that the extent of first-class wheat-growing land there is such as would surprise even the oldest resident of the Victoria district. I do ask that the Chief Secretary, since he comes from the Central Province, should press this matter upon the Ministry with all his force so that before any decision is reached on the 3,000 farms scheme every portion of the Central Province, and indeed of the whole State, may receive due consideration. I may be told that it is not the Government's intention to create the whole of the 3,000 farms in one district. I hope that such is not the intention, though everything we have heard so far indicates that it is. If I remember rightly, some months ago the Premier was credited with saying that instead of building a little railway here and another there, and so on, we ought to build one big railway serving a big district. In our part of the State we urge that it would be sound policy to build a line out 20 miles from the head of the Yuna railway, and so connect with the existing railway system. Such a line would bring into use hundreds of thousands of acres at present lying idle. Settlers in the Dartmoor area are now cutting tracks and developing their blocks at their own expense being too far from a railway to receive Agricultural Bank assistance. Quite rightly we hear a lot and we talk a lot about our wonderful wheat yield. I am of the opinion that we do not hear enough, and individual



do not talk enough about the sheep possibilities of the State. From the departmental officers down it is continually wheat, wheat, wheat, but pardonable pride is expressed in the Governor's Speech about the increase in the number of sheep and the increase in our wool production. What I am more particularly concerned about, and what should occupy the attention of every member of the Legislature, is this: that whilst we are perfectly satisfied about the increase in the number of sheep and the increase in the production of wool, are we so sure that the number of farmers running sheep is gradually increasing? That is the point, and it is only necessary for one to travel on the Wongan Hills line, a country that has been successfully pioneered by stout-hearted men and women, to find that out. The Government of the day were quite justified in building that railway, but what one is struck by is the absence of sheep, especially in the southern part of the Central Province around Ballidu, Dartmoor and Pithara. During the fortnight I spent there I saw more water being carted in that period than I ever saw in my particular district in the whole period of my existence. I do think that when men have successfully pioneered a waterless district from the wheat-growing point of view, when they have demonstrated the wheat-growing capabilities of the land, every possible assistance should be given them to secure that success they so richly deserve by making every inquiry, by using the science that the State has at its command, in the direction of providing water so that they may run sheep. Mr. Fraser in the course of his remarks mentioned that people in the city did not take that interest, nor were they concerned with the progress of the country districts that I am very glad he thinks they should have. Sir William Lathlain crossed swords with Mr. Fraser for saying that. Sir William contended that the people of the State were greatly interested in the progress of the people in the country. I would point out the different angles from which those two hon. members see these things. We have only to remember that Mr. Fraser comes into contact with a class of people different entirely from those whom Sir William meets, and it does help us to understand a great deal more clearly when we have it from Mr. Fraser that the people with whom he more closely associates do not display that interest in the success of those engaged in the great primary industry, that he thinks they ought to display. Mr. Fraser

is more likely than Sir William Lathlain to be able to tell us what those people think. It is a matter on which we must congratulate ourselves that the hon. member recognises that the sooner the people of the metropolitan area realise that their interests are identical with those of the men and women who go outback to create the wealth of the State, the better will it be. Mention has frequently been made of the aliens in our midst. The Premier made certain statements the other day, and we have heard members of this Chamber also refer to the subject. Whilst no one of us, no matter how wise he may be, knows all about everything, certainly some of us know more about some things than do others, and whilst I claim not to be an authority, I can say that I have been brought into close contact with a number of Italians and a few Slavs in connection with the work of clearing. I am going to refer to a phase of this matter, reference to which I do not think has been made; but since the matter has been so frequently spoken of and exhaustively dealt with by members, I consider there should be some further allusion to it. It is not a question whether the Australian can or cannot do the work, but this certainly does apply to the Britisher. I am sorry to say that a great many of the migrants coming out here are physically incapable of clearing the lands of the State. The Australian certainly is capable of doing this work and I should be sorry to admit his inferiority to anybody. The type of migrant with whom I have come into contact—I can only speak of those I have met—has not been physically capable of competing with the sturdy type of foreigner who is coming to this State.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Question!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Mr. Gray says "question." I intend to make it as fair and as plain to the House as I possibly can, and I will give an instance to support my contention. I met a man recently on the Mendel's estate, which was purchased by the Government not very long ago. I do not even know his name. Whilst talking to him on his block he said he had come from the Midland Junction workshops and had taken up the block of land for himself and his two sons. He added that he had always voted Labour and would continue to vote Labour. "But," he added, "I am beginning to think I shall not always be able to vote Labour." I asked him what the trouble was and he replied, "I am up against my old com-



rades; I tried to get this block cleared to put in a crop; if I had waited for Britishers or Australians to clear it, it would never have been cleared as you see it cleared to-day. I was forced to break one of the Labour principles by employing foreigners to clear it." I shall tell the House what has been my experience, not with one set of clearers but with a score of them. If members care to ask the secretary of the A.W.U. at Geraldton, or the sergeant of police in that town, they will be informed that I was regarded as a sort of honorary labour bureau. If a farmer wanted a man, he rang up the business with which I am connected, to secure labour, and I ran up and down the street in search of men. I have even gone this far, that I have engaged as fine a type of physically fit Australian as one could wish to see, taken him to the station after having supplied him with stores and a tent to the value of £7 or £8, and paid his fare to the job. In this particular instance I am sorry to say that on my way to the post office next morning the same individual rose up before me on the footpath in front of the Freemasons' Hotel.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do you quote that case as typically Australian?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I am merely relating what happened. The man went as far as Nabawa, where there is a refreshment booth. He got out of the train to have a drink—

Hon. E. H. Gray: How could he get a drink if he had no money?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I gave him a few shillings when I put him on the train.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He could not get drunk on that.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I did not say that he got drunk. I said that he got out of the train and while he was having refreshment the train went on without him. Then he met a commercial traveller, who gave him a lift back to Geraldton, and there he remained. The question of cheap labour does not enter; neither is it one of inferior workmen, but it is known to all of us that Australians are good men who go out into the back blocks and do hard bullocking work, the work that it is necessary that someone should do. But we also know that in addition to being hard workers, they are also hard drinkers, and that is the reason why in many cases they cannot be depended upon to see their job through. On a Sunday

morning I have gone round the hotels looking for men to urge them to go back to their jobs, men who had come into the town to have a birthday, but it has not been possible to induce them to pull themselves together and return to their work. It is because of their natural weakness that they are a failure. They go out and work hard and live hard, and then come into town to drink hard. I am putting this up as an explanation, having no desire to cast aspersions on our own people. The Britishers with whom I have come into contact have not been physically capable of going out to do this hard work. They are not accustomed to the conditions that must face them. The Australian will go out and do hard work, but he will not see the work through. He comes into town for rest and recreation. This accounts in a great measure for the desire of holders of land to secure the services of foreigners. They know that once a foreigner goes on to an area of land, he stops there until the job is done. We have heard the views of various members on the subject of unemployment and the demonstration of unemployed that took place a few weeks ago. It is a sign of encouragement when we find a young Labour supporter from his place in the House indulging in such frank criticism as did Mr. Fraser of the Premier's attitude towards the unemployed. As Mr. Williams told us last evening, we must all vote solidly for law and order. I maintain that the Premier, whilst insisting on law and order, should have acted towards the unfortunate unemployed in such a way as to have prevented the necessity for calling out the police. I have no wish to make political capital out of this trouble, but I do say that the head of the Government should have behaved towards the unemployed in the same way as we expect those who are paid to maintain law and order, the police, are expected to behave. It is not enough for policemen to be present for the prevention of crime, or to arrest a man for a crime after it has been committed. They should do their best to take such action as will ensure that crimes are not committed. If there had been only 100 unemployed in the city, and 75 of them were genuinely out of work, and desirous of obtaining it in order to provide sustenance for their wives and families, and 25 per cent. of them had been "won't works," it was still the duty of the Premier to go out to those men, talk to them, discuss the

position with them, and as the head of the Government, offer them assistance. I deprecate the starting of subscription lists for the unemployed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Would you let them starve?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I hold decided views on that matter, just as I do on the hospital question. These are not matters for the individual. It is not sufficient for a man to go round with a list and for the generous people in the community to give their money, while the other fellows will do nothing. These matters should be taken up immediately by the State, so that everyone is made to pay his quota towards those unfortunates who are willing to work but are genuinely unable to get it, or who are in sickness and distress. If there ever was a matter which should be taken up by the State in a young country like this, it is this. It is immaterial whether 25 or 50 men receive succour. The rain falls on the just and unjust alike. I do not think there is a sight more sad than that of able-bodied men who are ready and willing to work but are unable to find it. The Minister for Lands came back from a tour a few weeks ago. He stated in the Press that there was plenty of work for men in the country. It is idle for him to make a statement like that. He was quite wrong, for there was not plenty of work in the country. In the town of Geraldton men were going from door to door and existing on the food they were given by the townspeople. This has been going on throughout the State. I commend the Government for what they have since done, but without being over-critical or too fault-finding, I cannot help saying that they have awakened too late. I hope that never again will the question have to be so much paraded before the public ere the head of the Government takes such action as is expected of him in times such as those. It is impossible to satisfy everyone. No doubt there are some men who will not work, but I feel that the unemployed problem has been particularly severe this season. Members may recollect that a few weeks ago there was a discussion in the daily Press between the secretary of the Police Union and the Minister for Justice. Here again I maintain it is not the duty of those in charge of these departments to wait until a crisis arises. Immediately a Minister is advised by the secretary of the union that there is grave dissatisfaction amongst its members, he should look into the

matter. I travelled for some miles in the train recently with an officer in charge of a country police station. He could talk of nothing but his work and the grievances under which he was labouring. One may say, "Let him get out if he is not satisfied." That is not a fair way to treat a man. This officer has served for many years in the police force, and is a married man with a family. A policeman has many office and patrol duties to perform single-handed. This particular officer had no other police station within 100 miles of him. He satisfied me that he has a just cause for complaint against his employer, the State. In our force we have a splendid body of men, and we should be prepared to look into their complaints. The head of the department should meet the representatives of the union and make inquiries into the complaints. Instead of that it seems to me that they rather ridicule the idea that there is anything in the matter. That antagonises the members of the force towards their heads, and brings about many industrial troubles in consequence. Arbitration we all agree is a good thing, but we are nevertheless faced with certain difficulties. Unions after unions state through the public Press that they cannot get their claims heard except after long delays. Then a union comes out on strike, and is referred to as breaking the law. Only then do the Government take action, appoint a special committee, and investigate complaints. That is the last thing that should happen. If the court is unable to deal expeditiously with complaints, some action should be taken by the Administration to enable those complaints to be ventilated and, if necessary, adjusted. Men could then be accused of the things of which they are accused with greater confidence, because an investigation would have been made beforehand into their grievances. I hope the remarks I may make concerning the redistribution of seats will not be considered out of place. It is not my desire to offend members who have sat in this Chamber for many years. I have nothing personal to say against any particular member, but as a newcomer here I feel it my duty, with all due respect, to set forth my views. Let me say in the first place I think there are too many members of Parliament in Western Australia. I cannot hope that a redistribution will lessen the number, but I do trust it will not increase it. I have no



desire to give offence, but I cannot help remarking that for the metropolitan-suburban area we have 18 members of Parliament. Not only could that number be reduced in the metropolitan-suburban area to half, but the same thing could be done throughout the State with considerable advantage to Parliament and its business, and also to the country.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Are you sure your figures are correct with regard to the metropolitan area?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Yes. There are 12 in another place and six members in this Chamber.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member has under-stated the position. There are 21 members.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am definitely of opinion that amongst the men and women who are developing this State—I include also the merchant princes in the city as well as the most humble primary producer out-back—there is a deep-rooted conviction that they are not getting full value from Parliament for their money. We are constantly being told by men who make it their business to study these questions that this is an age when everything must be conducted in an up-to-date and business-like manner. Parliament is, however, still being conducted in the way that it was carried on 100 years ago. There was a time when men gave up their days to serving their country without fee or reward.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It was a bad time for the workers then.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It has now been altered; the country decided that members of Parliament should be paid. Had it not been for that, I could not have occupied this seat now. Members of Parliament also decided what rate they should be paid. Parliament is still being conducted in the same way as when members served their country without fee or reward, just as members of municipal councils and road boards do now. I do think that Parliament should meet earlier in the day, and attempt to transact its business in a much shorter period than it does now, so that Ministers might devote more time than some of them do to the administration of their respective departments. It was unknown to me that the Leader of the party to which I belong had moved in another place that the House

should meet at 2.30 p.m. I had not heard from him in the matter, and he does not know I am referring to it to-day. I am pleased that someone else than a new member should hold this view. If we could convey to the general taxpayer that we are attempting to set about the country's business in a business-like manner, he would take more interest in the elections and the doings of Parliament generally than he does take. Public men are continually deploring the apathy of the part of the general public. It is a matter which deserves the serious consideration of every man who has the well being of his country at heart. It is not good that people should not take an interest in the Government of their country, which those of us who think about the question believe they should. I believe that the apathy of the public is directly attributable, in a good many instances—I do not say in the majority of cases—to the apathy of some members of Parliament. The sooner we take more interest in our parliamentary duties, the sooner I think shall we be able to dispel that idea. I feel sure it will not be dispelled altogether, but it would tend to show people that we were endeavouring to become more up to date. One great objection put up, not by the present administrators but by past administrators in another place the other day, was that if Parliament were to meet at 2.30 p.m. Ministers would not be able to devote that time to their department, which is necessary.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Have they not found that out elsewhere?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Leader of this House is an example to all. He must be here to attend to his duties; if he were not here the House would no doubt be led by the Honorary Minister. If every Minister were as conscientious as is the Leader of this House in attending to the affairs of his departments, the country would not have much fault to find. It does not give me any pleasure to say this, but I should be wanting in my duty to the people I represent if I did not say it. I know two Ministers, who are administering two big departments, who are away too frequently from their offices when they should be attending to matters of importance to the State. In their absence they are not looking after the interests of the departments, but are attending to their own pri-



vate affairs. To make matters worse, one of these Ministers, in addition to having his own department to look after, is saddled with the responsibility of administering one of the most important departments of the State. Another Minister is away in another part of the world. If that applies to Ministers, as I have just reluctantly stated, so it applies to other hon. members. There are some who obtain leave of absence on the ground of "urgent private business." That may be a phrase that is all right in Parliamentary circles, but it is not regarded in that light by the public outside. If members wish to go round the world in order to extend their knowledge and later make use of it in the interests of the State, let them take their trips abroad while Parliament is in recess. They should be at their posts ready to do their duty when Parliament is in session. I do not wish to be misunderstood.

Hon. J. Cornell: I think the interests of the country would be served if we were to shut up Parliament for 12 months, while members went away. The Government could carry on to greater advantage.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I do not suggest for one moment that the duties of a member of Parliament begin and end when he takes his seat in this Chamber. There are many useful things that we can do for our constituents outside Parliament, but at the same time when the House is sitting, members should be in attendance to transact public business. I am inclined to agree with the interjection of Mr. Cornell. I do not seek applause, but I am concerned that hon. members should not think me impertinent. I have no such desire. Therefore, Mr. Cornell's interjection heartens me and encourages me to say that I am of the opinion that if the Government were to forecast their programme, after which members of Parliament went away and rubbed shoulders with the people of the State for 12 months the Government could go ahead with the administration of the affairs of the State and we would thus save some money, while the interests of the electors would be as well, if not a little better served than when Parliament was in session. However, to continue; I wish to deal with the provision of workers' homes. It is sad to think that a subject that is receiving attention in all parts of the British Empire, should be so little before us in the Parliament of a

progressive State such as Western Australia. I was extremely disappointed when I visited the offices of the Workers' Homes Board a couple of months before the close of the last financial year, and ascertained that all the money allotted to the board had been applied for and that the applications had embraced all the money to be made available for the next financial year as well. In Geraldton there are 11 workers' homes that are being built by the board, the first for many years. While the house shortage has been very acute there, applications have been coming in from various parts of the district. It was in connection with an application for a workers' home in one part of my province that I visited the Workers' Homes Board office. Hon. members can imagine my feelings when I had to write to the individual concerned and inform him that it was useless making an application for a worker's home until after the next financial year. The Government might well consider the advisableness of increasing the amount available for the operations of the board. I was pleased to note in the "West Australian" this morning that the Premier had stated that a considerable sum of money would be available for the purpose of building workers' homes in the country districts. Perhaps that will overcome the difficulty. During the week we have heard Mr. Mann speak about group settlement matters. In fact, that subject has been discussed almost ad nauseam. I merely mention it for the purpose of drawing attention to the fact that in the Federal sphere of politics, there is a standing Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts. The sooner such a system is introduced in this State, the better it will be for our finances. It would be in the interests of the State if all proposals involving the expenditure of large sums of public money were to be carefully examined by such a committee before Parliament were to agree to the work being undertaken.

Hon. E. H. Gray: But that standing Parliamentary committee has not prevented the Federal Government spending money extravagantly.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It may be that a lot of money has been spent in directions that have appeared to us as foolish and extravagant, but the hon. member does not know how much money that committee has been responsible for the Federal Government not spending. In my opinion, it would be a



good thing if a committee of public accounts were established to scrutinise schemes that have to be dealt with from time to time in this State. The next paragraph in the Governor's Speech to which I shall refer relates to medical services. That, of course, covers the activities of our hospitals. At this juncture, I desire to thank the Chief Secretary for his graceful references to the small efforts I have been able to make in connection with hospital work at Geraldton. It is true that I have taken an interest in that work for many years past and it was a great disappointment to me when Parliament rejected the Hospitals Bill three years ago. No matter how this question may be viewed by hon. members, I hope that whatever the provisions of the Bill this session may be, members will vote for the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Although we do not know what they will be, and may not agree to them!

Hon. E. H. HALL: I understand that the secretary of the Medical Department, Mr. Huelin, is responsible for the drafting of the Bill. I have not spoken to him about it, but I know that Mr. Huelin understands the position regarding hospitals better than any hon. member here. I believe Mr. Huelin was responsible for the Bill that was rejected last time. If hon. members had had much experience of Government hospitals throughout the State, they would vote for any measure that will ensure that the people who use our hospitals shall pay something to the hospitals during their time of sickness.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: The last Bill exempted all those people!

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It has been suggested that either premium bonds or State lotteries should be resorted to in order to raise revenue for the hospitals. I do not profess to know much about either form of revenue production, but we know that large sums of money are going out of this State for investment in Tattersall's or in the Golden Casket in Queensland. In view of that, I cannot understand how any hon. member can say that he objects to gambling and yet permits that business to go on from year to year.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Tasmania lives on Tattersalls.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: We may have our varying viewpoints on the question, but I say it is very unbecoming to note the spectacle of street appeals in aid of the little children who are attended to in that excellent institution, the Children's Hospital, or

in aid of the Perth Hospital. The time is coming when we should make a strenuous endeavour to stop these street appeals and to see that those who use the hospitals pay something, perhaps in the form of a tax on wages, towards their upkeep.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Why not use both methods?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: One cannot speak of the Perth Hospital without paying a well-deserved tribute to those doctors who undertake honorary work at that institution. They make available all their skill and knowledge in the interests of people who cannot afford to secure such experienced attention elsewhere. The doctors come to the aid of men who are down and out, and give their expert attention to them. The trouble is that those interested in hospital matters are being forced to realise that very often the man who is able to pay, is denied admittance from such institutions where skilled attention is available. That is another phase that should be considered. I cannot speak of hospitals without drawing the attention of the House to one point in respect of which I am particularly annoyed. For many years we have had those at the head of affairs drawing attention to the continuous flow of people from the country to the city. While the city should have all those things that a city should possess, still the Government should see to it that even-handed justice is meted out to city and country alike. At Geraldton the local people initiated a movement that led to the establishment of a maternity home and they reduced the fees from four guineas to three guineas. At the time we were charged with crippling private enterprise. At a conference I attended to-day, it was said by Mr. Glasheen that if there was anything of a national description, it was our railways. For my part, I say that if there is one national task, it is that which involves migration, and our hospitals should be regarded in the same light. The assistance we received from the Government when we established that maternity home was the use of a building known as "the Old Residency." The institution is known as the Geraldton and District Maternity Hospital, and after two years' battling we received a subsidy from the Government amounting to £50 a year.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: That would not buy soap.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Can anyone defend a policy of an Administration that accepts the whole responsibility for conducting such



a fine institution as the King Edward Memorial Hospital, where the interests of women in the metropolitan, suburban and inner country areas are attended to so ably, and yet makes available to Geraldton a subsidy of £50 a year for the maternity hospital? I ask the Chief Secretary, in the name of some of those splendid women who have been responsible for the establishment of such a fine institution at Geraldton, to endeavour to secure a little more financial assistance for them. By so doing, he will extend some more recognition to the great work that is being done for the women of the Victoria district. Had it not been for the beneficent action of Mrs. Ben Sharpe, of Woolleen Station, who made £300 available to the committee, the establishment of the maternity home would have been delayed for a considerable period. Let me refer to White City. I do not think anyone will accuse me of being a wowser, but I have never been able to understand why White City has been allowed to continue as a blot on the fair city of Perth. How the Government can permit it and with any idea of consistency stop a tipping competition, I cannot understand. I wish to touch upon the recent conference of road boards. The Premier, in another place a few nights ago, said the conference had been held for political purposes. As a municipal councillor of Geraldton, I have received a communication from the town clerk of that municipality. It will serve to give members an idea of how that conference came about. This communication bears the date 20th February of this year, and is signed by the secretary of the Main Roads Board and addressed to the town clerk, Geraldton. It sets out the amount due by each local authority for the Moora-Geraldton road and for the Geraldton-Meekatharra road. On the 17th March a meeting of the Geraldton Municipal Council was held. The mayor of the municipality has very little interest in party politics. But when the Main Road Boards apportionments were indicated at that council meeting, the mayor protested against them. In the "Geraldton Guardian" the proceedings at the meeting are reported as follows:—

The mayor said it was very unfair. They were given a few facts in the letter, but nothing detailed. He thought a very strong point in their protest would be the way in which the money was being squandered. The Commonwealth Government had first intended to do the work by simple contract, but the State thought different and wanted it done by day labour,

and now if they were forced to carry it out by contract they made the conditions so difficult that nobody would touch it.

Mr. Moffatt, referring to work done in Carnamah and Yalgoo for which they were required to contribute, asked what good such work was to Geraldton.

Cr. Davis: The whole thing is a botch.

The Mayor: It is a terrible business.

Mr. Moffatt said they had until 30th April to enter an objection.

After further discussion, Cr. Davis moved that the Mayor of Perth be communicated with, suggesting a conference of local governing bodies, and that in the meantime an objection be lodged.

Cr. Clarke seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

That was the genesis of the conference held in Perth, which the Premier said had been arranged for party political purposes. One cannot refer to the Main Roads Board without thinking of local government. As one who, for the last eight years, has been a member of a municipal council, I take an interest in the valuable work performed throughout the State by men who give up their time to serve on local bodies in a purely honorary capacity. I ask the indulgence of the House while I quote briefly from a paper compiled by Mr. Bryan, the mayor of Cottesloe, who submitted this paper to the commission that dealt with the proposed amendment of the Commonwealth Constitution. Mr. Bryan says—

Of the three systems of government of the people of Australia, namely, Commonwealth, State and local, the latter is by no means the least in its direct and intimate relations with the people as units. In this State there are 1,116 West Australian citizens who give up their leisure and incidentally other valuable time to look after local government. They are in turn backed by administrative experts occupying important positions of trust in our local communities. The West Australian local government achievements in the past and present are worthy of a little more considerate help from those other two sets of governmental machines that are advantaged by a system that allows them both to press the tariff excise or other easily pressed buttons to produce the money from the masses of the people in an indirect fashion. Local government, on the other hand, is handicapped with statutory provisions that limit its taxing powers—irrespective of our necessities or the depreciation of the purchasing power of our national currency.

He goes on to speak of the record of road boards, and I will conclude by reading this—

I might point out that several years ago from a conference representative of the whole State I was selected to support Their Worships the Mayors of Perth and Subiaco to impress upon the Premier of the present Government



the necessity for bringing an Act up to date at the earliest possible moment. Conferences have been held since 1910 to bring about these desired amendments. The Premier has not seen fit yet to even listen to our claims, despite the assurance of Mr. Angwin, then Minister for Lands, that the recommendations of the conference would soon become law. Year by year our taxing powers have been whittled by newer Acts, and our only form of taxation now is restricted to rates, building fees, and dog licenses.

Now let me read the following extract from an article on local government taken from the "Bulletin"—

Though usually on the side of the angels, Dickens made a subtle attack on the most highly cherished of his country's institutions when he drew his caricature of Bumble. Luckily for the Old Dart, the shaft missed its mark, and the parishes, boroughs, and counties retain their ancient rights and powers. The United States, building their fabric of government on the English pattern, leave at least half the sphere to local authorities. Only in Australia have the powers of local government been whittled away until they are so small that it is a wonder self-respecting citizens take the trouble to administer them.

The adoption by the Bavinshaws of the principal recommendations of the New States Commission gives the senior State an opportunity to regain the road from which is strayed 70 years ago. Like other States, N.S.W. ran away from Bumble, but didn't succeed in eluding him. The process of centralisation merely shifted him from the parish to Parliament, where the worst features of his Bumbledom found a wide and varied field for expression. The result was only what might have been expected. In communities organised on the British plan, most politicians serve their apprenticeship on local bodies. The more powerful and responsible the local bodies the better is the training they afford in the business of government, and the larger is the field from which men can be selected for the control of national affairs. The Bavinshaws aim to hand over to the municipalities most of the responsibilities such bodies enjoy in the older lands. The new District Councils will have to administer at least part of the laws relating to health, education, police protection and justice. They will carry out a variety of public works at present entrusted to the State Government.

To a certain extent—certainly to a far greater extent than is possible under existing conditions—these activities will be taken out of the sphere of party politics. They will be watched critically by people on the spot, who will resent waste and ineptitude because it will directly affect their own pockets. A central government is a vague aloof collection of high-salaried strangers, responsible to nobody but party bosses. A local government has to live on its job, and it gets kicked with enthusiasm by the populace whenever it makes a blunder.

Larger powers of local government ought to give Australians more respect for the law and more concern for efficiency in the conduct of public affairs.

I think we have something to learn from the Old Country on which our Parliamentary institutions are based and that, as stated in that article published in a paper that has no great regard for things done in the Old Country, the power of the local authorities should be enlarged so that they might relieve the central Government of some of their responsibility. A lot of money has been spent on education, and rightly so. Not one of us would stand up and deny the right of any Administration to spend as much as it could on the education of our children. But we should be careful to see that we get value for our money. As one who did not enjoy the advantages of a good education, I do not wish to be accused of wanting to deny the present-day children those advantages. But in my opinion we are in danger of the present system going in for rather too many frills. As an example, cooking classes are conducted in the various schools. It is only right that the girls should be taught to cook, but we should get value for the money expended. Recently a little girl, 12 years of age, went home to her mother and demanded 1 lb. of chops, 2 lbs. of potatoes, and 2 onions for the cooking class. The mother, a sensible woman, said, "I'll not give you anything of the kind. You may have half a pound of chops and one pound of potatoes." When the girl came home that night she brought with her an Irish stew made up of the stuff she had taken to school. At that time there were 60 or 80 men walking about Geraldton looking for work, and in need of food. However, the cooking class was held in the afternoon. The school comes out at 12 noon and resumes again a little after 1 o'clock. It would be half-past one or a quarter to two before the potatoes were peeled and the stuff ready to go on the fire. I am told that if you are to get any good out of an Irish stew, it must be allowed to simmer for a considerable time. But the school comes out at a quarter to four, so it is no wonder that the Irish stew taken home by that little girl was found to be quite uneatable. I am sorry that a member who takes a keen interest in the University has just left the Chamber. If the University is all that its supporters claim for it, it is a wonder we do not get more practical results from it than we do. I wonder if those young engineers who have been sent out into vari-



ous districts by the Main Roads Board are products of the University? If they are it is a great pity that whilst they may have received theoretical tuition and passed their examinations, they were not given more practical experience before being sent out to fly around the country in motor cars and pose as engineers. Then there is another thing. We are told that education should make gentlemen and gentlewomen of ordinary men and women. If so, I say that the proceedings on undergraduates' day do not reflect credit on the educated young people at the University. In the bigger cities of the Empire it may be that things are even worse, but I do not wish to see the doings of University students in older cities emulated in Perth. If we aspire to set an example in some of these things, our University students should be severely spoken to and asked to comport themselves as educated young people. The issue of patents, I am told, is a Federal matter. Yet I ask members to urge the Administration to do all they can to encourage young men and women of ideas to make use of the patents office. In the province I represent, around Northampton and across to the Mullewa line, there are large deposits of lead. The Government have spent quite a lot of money on the Surprise mine in endeavouring to improve the methods of treating that lead. Recently I came into contact with a young man who had the idea of patenting a simple process of dealing with the lead. But he gave up that idea because of the expense entailed. He was a working miner, and he had gone to a lawyer, who communicated with the patent agents in Perth. However, the expense and the red tape entailed discouraged that young fellow, and he abandoned the idea of taking out a patent. Such procedure in an enlightened community is quite wrong. People with ideas should be encouraged. There should be a Government department or an officer to whom such ideas could be communicated. We should give inventors all possible assistance instead of placing obstacles in their way.

Hon. J. R. Brown: They should be supplied with Government assistance or a tombstone.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Regarding electoral matters, I was one of the first electoral officers appointed by the Commonwealth when the Commonwealth, quite unnecessarily to my way of thinking, inaugurated its Electoral Department. With a

view to economical administration, I see no sound reason why a determined effort should not be made to draw up a scheme whereby the State and Commonwealth Electoral Departments could be merged and the work done by the one staff. We are told that the boundaries differ, but in my opinion that is not a sound excuse. Boundaries could be so adjusted that the one office could do all the work. Members of the Federal Parliament represent precisely the same people as the State Parliament, and why should we have two distinct sets of officials attending to the same business? I have no desire to be disloyal to the Commonwealth, but realising that we have to look after our own State, I refuse to bank one penny in the Commonwealth Savings Bank. When I found that the money of the State Savings Bank was used to foster the development of this State, I transferred my few pounds from the Commonwealth Savings Bank to the State Savings Bank. If ever an unfederal act was committed by the Commonwealth it was the giving of notice to the States to vacate the post offices where they had been carrying on their savings bank business. I recognise that all the money spent on the Geraldton harbour will not cause one additional grain of wheat to be grown or exported. It is the policy of the Government to provide harbour facilities at the various outports, but the work at Geraldton is dragging on too long. I cannot understand why the Minister for Railways, who represents the district, should offer to subsidise the municipal council in respect of relief work for the unemployed when more men could have been employed on the harbour works. Let me say that the council has taken full advantage of the Government's offer by putting in hand work to the extent of £3,000. The Government, however, should have seized the opportunity to put 50 or 60 additional men on the harbour works. I have it on good authority that a greater number of men would produce more economical results there.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Where is the money to come from?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Geraldton water supply has received a certain amount of consideration from the Government, for which we are duly thankful, but I ask the Government not to regard the water supply as affecting Geraldton alone. The Geraldton community should not be saddled with the cost of the failures for which I con-



sider certain Government departments have been responsible, but the town should be given a chance to extend and develop the secondary industries, which we believe are possible only with the provision of a decent supply of water. This morning I read that the metropolitan water supply had proved adequate during the last year, notwithstanding the great demands made upon it. I wish I could say the same thing for the Geraldton water supply. Last session Parliament passed a Bill authorising the construction of a railway from Meekatharra to Wiluna. I understand that the mining prospects at Wiluna are bright. As a representative of the province in which Wiluna is situated, I sincerely trust that the expectations of the mining men concerned in the venture will be fully realised. Still, before the country is committed to any expense such as the building of a railway I hope the Government will test in every way the bona fides of the men interested in the venture.

Hon. J. R. Brown: The Government will attend to that. You need not worry.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Notwithstanding that I desire to see the greatest possible development in the Central Province, I should not be doing my duty if I supported the expenditure of any money for any object that was not absolutely and fully justified.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You cannot justify any mining proposition to that extent.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Quite recently a gentleman, who knows a good deal more of the subject than does the hon. member who interjected, raised some doubts in my mind regarding the treatment of the Wiluna ore. From slight knowledge of the matter I understood that the oil flotation process was an unqualified success, but according to the expert referred to, such is not the case. I happened to be in Wiluna at the time when Mr. Ben Howe, scientist and chemist, was sent there by the old Gwalia Consolidated Co. to solve the difficulty of treating the ore. So many thousands of pounds were set aside and he was told, "You have got your results in the laboratory; go to Wiluna, erect an experimental plant and if you still get your results, we will go ahead." He built the plant and Bewick, Moreing and Co. sent up three assayers, each to take a shift, but when they tried out the process, it was a failure.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Because he did not have the right flux.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Wiluna was a prosperous mining town while the money was being spent, but when the assayers were unsuccessful in extracting the gold, the town simply flopped. I want the Government to be absolutely certain that the gentleman now interested in those leases have solved the difficulty.

Hon. J. R. Brown: If we had required such assurance in the past there would have been no Kalgoorlie.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the hon. member not to be so persistent with his interjections, which are all the more objectionable because they are not pertinent.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The lands in the immediate vicinity of Geraldton known as the Greenough flats have been described by visitors qualified to express an opinion as eminently suitable for dairying. Although they are almost the oldest agricultural lands in the State, it is recognised that they are not suitable for wheat growing. As pests have rendered them unprofitable for wheat growing, they have been used for depasturing sheep, and gradually they are getting into the hands of a few people. Let me remind the House that a previous Government saw fit to expend £14,000 or £15,000 in the erection of a butter and bacon factory at Geraldton, but before doing so they did not think it worth while to ensure that the factory could be kept supplied with cream. When Mr. Troy, the Minister for Lands, was appointed Minister for Agriculture, he was tendered a civic reception at Geraldton and was asked what he intended to do about the butter factory. His reply was, "If you will get the cows, I will tell you what we will do with the factory." While that reply may have seemed eminently sensible to Mr. Troy, it did not cut much ice with me. The country has been put to the expense of providing a factory, and if gentlemen occupying administrative positions are worthy of their positions, they should make some effort to secure a return from the money expended. But no effort has been made. A matter of such importance should not be dismissed in such an airy fashion. I commend this matter to the attention of the Government, and trust they will try to get the factory going



again, especially as we have land suitable for dairying purposes close handy to where the factory is situated. It would be necessary for the Government to repurchase the land, but in suggesting that we are not asking for any preferential treatment. If it is good enough to provide group settlements with cows on land whose suitability experience has proved to be questionable, surely land such as the Greenough flats that is said to be eminently suitable for dairying is worthy of consideration. Inquiry might well be made into the cost of purchasing a fair-sized area, and providing cows for the people who take it up. That would give the district a chance of getting some return from the money expended on the Geraldton butter and bacon factory. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Wittenoom, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 16th August, 1928.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

*Mr. Sleeman and the "West Australian."*

**MR. SLEEMAN** (Fremantle) [4.33]: I rise to make a personal explanation. In this morning's issue of the "West Australian" I am credited with having asked some questions in the House yesterday, whereas they are questions which emanated from the

member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson). I am always prepared to stand by anything I do myself, but I am not prepared to father all the questions that may be asked by that hon. member. I know mistakes do happen. I trust now that attention has been called to this matter, the Press will make the necessary correction, and give that correction the same publicity as was given to the questions that were published in this morning's paper.

Hon. G. Taylor: And put the same quality into it.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. C. P. Wansbrough, leave of absence for one month granted to the member for York (Mr. Latham) on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum), on the ground of urgent public business.

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

*Seventh Day.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. KENNEALLY** (East Perth) [4.36]: The position in which the State finds itself should be a cause for congratulation on the part of all parties, both Government and otherwise.

Hon. G. Taylor: Speak for yourself.

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: I am endeavouring to do that. I assume that members of the Opposition are just as desirous of seeing the State prosper as are members of the Government side of the House.

Hon. W. J. George: Why should they not be?

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: If the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) on behalf of the Opposition takes exception to that, I must confine my assumption to members on this side of the House.

**Mr. Richardson**: Members over here are quite capable of speaking for themselves.

**Mr. KENNEALLY**: I feel sure this House will approve of any action that the Government may take in conjunction with the Centenary Committee, which they have been responsible for forming with the object of